

# Executive Proclamation

## State of South Dakota

### Office of the Governor

*Whereas*, Oscar Micheaux, the fifth child of former slaves, was born in southern Illinois in 1884 and became the only black to purchase a relinquishment claim in Gregory County on the Rosebud Reservation; by the time he was 24, his claim was valued at \$20,000; and,

*Whereas*, Oscar Micheaux worked his land and made his mark in the early days of South Dakota's statehood, and he recorded his experiences as a settler in his book, *The Conquest*, which he personally sold in South Dakota and Nebraska; using the profits from 2500 copies, he established the Western Book and Supply Company, later called the Micheaux Book and Film Company, and this firm published his next two books, *The Forged Note* and *The Homesteader*; and,

*Whereas*, Micheaux turned his creative talents to film making and, in 1918, he directed *The Homesteader*, the first all-black, full-length American film directed by a black, putting Micheaux in history books; and,

*Whereas*, His film career took flight and Micheaux produced over 40 films; he also wrote four more books and, to this day, his works are lauded by critics and have a dedicated following; and,

*Whereas*, Citizens of Gregory County are sponsoring an Oscar Micheaux Film Festival August 6-10 to honor this early pioneer and great artist:

*Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds*, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim August 6-10, 2003, as

## OSCAR MICHEAUX FILM FESTIVAL DAY

in South Dakota, in honor of a remarkably talented South Dakota pioneer and the lesson of hard work, overcoming obstacles, and leading to success that he taught by example and through his films and books, and I urge all South Dakotans to avail themselves of this opportunity to learn more about the early days of South Dakota and an outstanding pioneer by attending the events of the Oscar Micheaux Film Festival.

*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twenty-ninth Day of July in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

  
*M. Michael Rounds*  
M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

*Chi Nelson*  
Chris Nelson, Secretary of State